

## Sermon 3: "When Truth Becomes Lies - Navigating the Great Deception"

May 12, 2024

### Opening Illustration:

Michael called last week with a troubling question: "Dad, how do I know what's really happening here? The reports I'm reading back home don't match what I'm seeing on the ground. Who's telling the truth?"

I had to admit - I don't know either. We're living in an age where truth itself is under attack. Deepfake videos make lies look real. Social media algorithms create echo chambers. Everyone claims to have "the real truth."

Jesus warned this would happen. He said deception would be so convincing that even God's people would struggle to tell truth from lies.

Text: 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of false miracles, signs and wonders to deceive those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie."

### I. The Great Deception Is Already Here

#### A. Technology Making Lies Look Like Truth

Deepfake videos of world leaders saying things they never said

AI-generated images that fool professional photographers

Voice cloning technology replicating anyone's speech

Revelation 13:15 - "speaking image" may be AI-powered

#### B. Information Warfare in Real Time

Ukraine war: Both sides claiming victory

COVID-19: Conflicting "expert" opinions

Michael experiencing propaganda firsthand

Truth becomes whatever supports your side

### C. Religious Deception Increasing

Prosperity preachers promising health and wealth

Progressive Christianity denying biblical authority

New Age spirituality infiltrating evangelical churches

False unity movements compromising gospel truth

## II. The Coming Super-Deception

### A. The Lawless One (vs. 9)

Antichrist will perform genuine supernatural signs

Not just parlor tricks - actual miracles through Satan's power

Will claim to be divine, demanding worship

Even true believers will be severely tested

### B. The Strong Delusion (vs. 11)

God will remove restraint on deception

People will choose lies over readily available truth

Not God deceiving them - God allowing consequences

Similar to Romans 1:18-32 - judicial hardening

### C. Signs We're Approaching This Time

Truth itself becoming "hate speech"

Scientific dissent being censored

Historical facts being rewritten

Biological reality being denied

### III. Why People Believe Lies

#### A. They Refuse to Love the Truth (vs. 10)

Not just rejecting truth - refusing to love it

Truth requires humility and change

Lies often tell us what we want to hear

Easier to believe comfortable lies than difficult truths

#### B. They Want Their Ears Tickled (2 Timothy 4:3)

Accumulating teachers who say what they want to hear

Shopping for pastors who won't challenge sin

Preferring motivational speeches over biblical sermons

Comfort over conviction

#### C. They Love Darkness Rather than Light (John 3:19)

Light exposes sin and requires response

Darkness allows continuing in rebellion

Moral relativism: "your truth" vs. "my truth"

Denying absolute truth allows moral compromise

#### IV. How to Stay Anchored in Truth

##### A. Know the Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable

Bible is our standard for truth

Regular Bible reading builds discernment

If it contradicts Scripture, it's false

##### B. Test Everything (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

"Test all things; hold fast what is good"

Don't believe something just because it's repeated often

Check sources and motivations

Ask: Does this align with biblical truth?

##### C. Pray for Discernment (1 Kings 3:9)

Solomon asked for discerning heart

Holy Spirit guides into all truth

Spiritual discernment required for spiritual deception

Prayer protects from intellectual pride

##### D. Stay in Biblical Community (Hebrews 10:25)

Iron sharpens iron

Multiple perspectives prevent deception

Accountability in biblical interpretation

Don't isolate yourself with only confirming sources

## V. Practical Guidelines for Our Time

### A. Limit News Consumption

Set specific times for news updates

Avoid 24/7 news cycles that create anxiety

Remember: Most news is opinion, not fact

Spend more time in Bible than news

### B. Diversify Information Sources

Don't get all news from one perspective

Read primary sources, not just commentary

International perspectives on American events

Historical context helps evaluate current claims

### C. Focus on What You Can Control

You can't fix media bias

You can love your neighbor

You can share the gospel

You can live righteously regardless of cultural lies

Personal Application:

For Michael and All Our Military:

Trust your training and your commanders

Remember your ultimate allegiance is to Christ

Don't let conflicting reports destroy your faith

Focus on your mission, not media spin

For Families Watching the News:

Turn off the fear machine occasionally

Discuss current events through biblical lens

Teach children to think critically

Model calm confidence in God's sovereignty

For the Church:

Preach the Word, not political opinions

Address cultural lies with biblical truth

Create safe spaces for honest questions

Don't become known more for what we're against than what we're for

Closing:

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In a world of deception, He remains our anchor. In an age of lies, His Word stands forever.

Michael asked me how to know what's really happening in his war zone. I told him: "Son, focus on the truth you can know for certain. God loves you. Jesus died for you. The Holy Spirit guides you. Everything else is just details."

The great deception is coming. It may already be here. But we don't have to be deceived. We have the Truth Himself living in our hearts.

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17)

When everything else seems uncertain, stand on the Word. It never changes. It never lies. It never fails.